

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method for receiving information content from an information
2 distribution system, wherein the information content is divided into a plurality of content
3 portions, the method comprising:

4 subscribing to a multicast group representing at least one content portion;
5 and
6 determining, at the end of a content portion, whether to subscribe to
7 another multicast group.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein subscribing comprises subscribing
2 to a multicast group representing at least one pay period.

1 3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 accepting payment from a user in accordance with the number of content
3 portions subscribed to, wherein a content portion is a pay period.

1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein subscribing to receive a multicast
2 group comprises subscribing to receive one of an entire content group and an increment
3 group.

1 5. The method of claim 4, further comprising:
2 determining, at the end of an increment group, whether to subscribe to an
3 entire content group, subscribe to an increment group or cease receiving content.

1 6. The method of claim 5, wherein subscribing includes automatically
2 subscribing to an entire content group if no input is received from a user at the end of an
3 increment group.

1 7. The method of claim 5, wherein subscribing includes automatically
2 subscribing to a second increment group if no input is received from a user at the end of a
3 first increment group.

1 8. The method of claim 1, wherein a number of multicast groups are
2 created, the number of multicast groups being defined by the equation:

3
$$G = \Sigma (N-k), \text{ where } k \text{ goes from } 0 \text{ to } N;$$

4 where G represents the maximum number of multicast groups; and

5 N represents the number of content portions, wherein a content portion is a
6 pay period.

1 9. The method of claim 1, wherein a number of multicast groups are
2 created, the number of multicast groups being defined by the equation:

3
$$G = 2N - 1;$$

4 where G represents the maximum number of multicast groups; and

5 N represents the number of content portions, wherein a content portion is a
6 pay period.

1 10. The method of claim 1, wherein a number of multicast groups are
2 created, the number of multicast groups being defined by the equation:

3
$$G = N + 1;$$

4 where G represents the maximum number of multicast groups; and

5 N represents the number of content portions, wherein a content portion is a
6 pay period.

1 11. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 dividing information content into discrete pay periods and re-key periods.

1 12. The method of claim 11, wherein a user must make a positive
2 request to join a subsequent multicast group.

1 13. The method of claim 11, wherein a user must make a negative
2 request to not be automatically propagated to a subsequent multicast group.

1 14. The method of claim 11, wherein a user who joins a multicast
2 group that is an increment group and does not join another group is not charged for the
3 viewing of content.

1 15. The method of claim 11, wherein dividing information content into
2 discrete pay periods and re-key periods includes dividing such that pay periods are
3 multiples of re-key periods.

1 16. The method of claim 11, wherein dividing information content into
2 discrete pay periods and re-key periods includes dividing such that the pay periods are
3 aligned with re-key periods.

1 17. The method of claim 11, further comprising:
2 associating security keys with a multicast group, wherein a first security
3 key corresponds to a current re-key period and a second security key corresponds to a
4 subsequent re-key period.

1 18. The method of claim 17, wherein the first security key and the
2 second security key are distributed simultaneously.

1 19. The method of claim 17, wherein a request to join a subsequent
2 multicast group does not have to be completed until the end of the subsequent re-key
3 period.

1 20. An apparatus for receiving information content from an
2 information distribution system, wherein the information content is divided into a
3 plurality of content portions, the apparatus comprising:
4 a transceiver coupled with the information distribution system;
5 a processor coupled with the transceiver;
6 instructions, operable on by the processor, for subscribing to a multicast
7 group representing at least one content portion; and
8 instructions, operable on by the processor, for determining at the end of a
9 content portion whether to subscribe to another multicast group.

1 21. The apparatus of claim 20, further comprising:
2 instructions, operable on by the processor, for accepting payment from a
3 user in accordance with the amount of content portions subscribed to.

1 22. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the instructions for subscribing
2 to receive a content group comprise instructions, operable on by the processor, for
3 subscribing to receive one of an entire content group and an increment group.

1 23. The apparatus of claim 22, further comprising:
2 instructions, operable on by the processor, for determining at the end of an
3 increment group whether to subscribe to an entire content group, subscribe to an
4 increment group or cease receiving content.

1 24. The apparatus of claim 23, wherein the instructions for subscribing
2 include instructions, operable on by the processor, for automatically subscribing to an
3 entire content group if no input is received from a user at the end of an increment group.

1 25. The apparatus of claim 20, further comprising:
2 instructions, operable on by the processor, for creating a number of content
3 groups, the number of content groups being defined by the equation:

4 $G = \Sigma (N-k)$, where k goes from 0 to N;

5 where G represents the number of content groups; and

6 N represents the number of pay periods.

1 26. The apparatus of claim 20, further comprising:
2 instructions, operable on by the processor, for dividing information content
3 into discrete pay periods and re-key periods.

1 27. The apparatus of claim 26, further comprising:
2 instructions, operable on by the processor, for associating security keys
3 with a user, wherein a first security key corresponds to a current re-key period and a
4 second security key corresponds to a subsequent re-key period.

1 28. The apparatus of claim 26, wherein the instructions for dividing
2 information content into discrete pay periods and re-key periods include instructions,
3 operable on by the processor, for dividing such that pay periods are multiples of re-key
4 periods.

1 29. The apparatus of claim 26, wherein the instructions for dividing
2 information content into discrete pay periods and re-key periods include instructions for
3 dividing such that pay periods are aligned with re-key periods.

1 30. An apparatus for receiving information content from an
2 information distribution system, wherein the information content is divided into a
3 plurality of content portions, the apparatus comprising:

4 a transceiver coupled with the information distribution system; and

5 a processor coupled with the transceiver,

6 wherein the processor is operable on instructions for subscribing to a
7 multicast group representing at least one content portion; and
8 the processor is operable on instructions for determining, at the end of a
9 content portion, whether to subscribe to another multicast group.

1 31. The apparatus of claim 30, wherein the processor is further
2 operable on instructions for accepting payment from a user in accordance with the
3 amount of content portions subscribed to.

1 32. The apparatus of claim 30, wherein the processor is further
2 operable on instructions for subscribing to receive one of an entire content group and an
3 increment group.

1 33. The apparatus of claim 32, wherein the processor is further
2 operable on instructions for determining, at the end of an increment group, whether to
3 subscribe to an entire content group, subscribe to an increment group or cease receiving
4 content.

1 34. The apparatus of claim 33, wherein the processor is further
2 operable on instructions for automatically subscribing to an entire content group if no
3 input is received from a user at the end of an increment group.

1 35. The apparatus of claim 30, wherein the processor is further
2 operable on instructions for creating a number of content groups, the number of content
3 groups being defined by the equation:

4
$$G = \sum (N-k), \text{ where } k \text{ goes from } 0 \text{ to } N;$$

5 where G represents the number of content groups; and

6 N represents the number of pay periods.

1 36. The apparatus of claim 30, wherein the processor is further
2 operable on instructions for dividing information content into discrete pay periods and re-
3 key periods.

1 37. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the processor is further
2 operable on instructions for associating security keys with a user, wherein a first security

3 key corresponds to a current re-key period and a second security key corresponds to a
4 subsequent re-key period.

1 38. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the processor is further
2 operable on instructions for dividing information content such that pay periods are
3 multiples of re-key periods.

1 39. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the processor is further
2 operable on instructions for dividing information content such that pay periods are
3 aligned with re-key periods.

1 40. A computer-readable media for directing a computer system to
2 facilitate the receipt of information content from an information distribution system,
3 wherein the information content is divided into a plurality of content portions, the
4 computer-readable media comprising:
5 instructions for subscribing to a multicast group representing at least one
6 content portion; and
7 instructions for determining, at the end of a content portion, whether to
8 subscribe to another multicast group.

1 41. The computer-readable media of claim 40, further comprising:
2 instructions for accepting payment from a user in accordance with the
3 amount of content portions subscribed to.

1 42. The computer-readable media of claim 40, wherein the instructions
2 for subscribing to receive a content group comprise instructions for subscribing to receive
3 one of an entire content group and an increment group.

1 43. The computer-readable media of claim 42, further comprising:
2 instructions for determining, at the end of an increment group, whether to
3 subscribe to an entire content group, subscribe to an increment group or cease receiving
4 content.

1 44. The computer-readable media of claim 43, wherein the instructions
2 for subscribing include instructions for automatically subscribing to an entire content
3 group if no input is received from a user at the end of an increment group.

1 45. The computer-readable media of claim 40, wherein a number of
2 content groups are created, the number of content groups being defined by the equation:
3 $G = \sum (N-k)$, where k goes from 0 to N;
4 where G represents the number of content groups; and
5 N represents the number of pay periods.

1 46. The computer-readable media of claim 40, further comprising:
2 instructions for dividing information content into discrete pay periods and
3 re-key periods.

1 47. The computer-readable media of claim 46, further comprising:
2 instructions for associating security keys with a user, wherein a first
3 security key corresponds to a current re-key period and a second security key corresponds
4 to a subsequent re-key period.

1 48. The computer-readable media of claim 46, wherein the instructions
2 for dividing information content into discrete pay periods and re-key periods include
3 instructions for dividing such that pay periods are multiples of re-key periods.

1 49. The computer-readable media of claim 46, wherein the instructions
2 for dividing information content into discrete pay periods and re-key periods include
3 instructions for dividing such that pay periods are aligned with re-key periods.

1 50. A data signal embodied in a carrier wave, the data signal generated
2 by a method comprising:
3 subscribing to a multicast group representing at least one content portion;
4 and
5 determining, at the end of a content portion, whether to subscribe to
6 another multicast group.

1 51. The data signal generated by the method of claim 50, the method
2 further comprising:
3 accepting payment from a user in accordance with the amount of content
4 portions subscribed to.

1 52. The data signal generated by the method of claim 50, wherein
2 subscribing to receive a content group comprises subscribing to receive one of an entire
3 content group and an increment group.

1 53. The data signal generated by the method of claim 52, the method
2 further comprising:
3 determining, at the end of an increment group, whether to subscribe to an
4 entire content group, subscribe to an increment group or cease receiving content.

1 54. The data signal generated by the method of claim 53, wherein
2 subscribing includes automatically subscribing to an entire content group if no input is
3 received from a user at the end of an increment group.

1 55. The data signal generated by the method of claim 50, wherein a
2 number of content groups are created, the number of content groups being defined by the
3 equation:

4
$$G = \sum (N-k), \text{ where } k \text{ goes from } 0 \text{ to } N;$$

5 where G represents the number of content groups; and

6 N represents the number of pay periods.

1 56. The data signal generated by the method of claim 50, the method
2 further comprising:
3 dividing information content into discrete pay periods and re-key periods.

1 57. The data signal generated by the method of claim 56, the method
2 further comprising:
3 associating security keys with a user, wherein a first security key
4 corresponds to a current re-key period and a second security key corresponds to a
5 subsequent re-key period.

1 58. The data signal generated by the method of claim 56, wherein
2 dividing information content into discrete pay periods and re-key periods includes
3 dividing such that pay periods are multiples of re-key periods.

1 59. The data signal generated by the method of claim 56, wherein
2 dividing information content into discrete pay periods and re-key periods includes
3 dividing such that the pay periods are aligned with re-key periods.

1 60. A system for receiving information content from an information
2 distribution system, wherein the information content is divided into a plurality of content
3 portions, the system comprising:

4 means for subscribing to receive a multicast group representing at least
5 one content portion; and

6 means for determining, at the end of a content portion, whether to
7 subscribe to another multicast group.

1 61. The system of claim 60, further comprising:

2 means for accepting payment from a user in accordance with the amount
3 of content portions subscribed to.

1 62. The system of claim 60, wherein means for subscribing comprises
2 means for subscribing to receive one of an entire content group and an increment group.

1 63. The system of claim 62, further comprising:

2 means for determining, at the end of an increment group, whether to
3 subscribe to an entire content group, subscribe to an increment group or cease receiving
4 content.

1 64. The system of claim 63, wherein means for subscribing includes
2 means for automatically subscribing to an entire content group if no input is received
3 from a user at the end of an increment group.

1 65. The system of claim 60, further comprising:

2 means for creating a number of content groups, the number of content
3 groups being defined by the equation:

4 $G = \Sigma (N-k)$, where k goes from 0 to N;

5 where G represents the number of content groups; and

6 N represents the number of pay periods.

1 66. The system of claim 60, further comprising:

2 means for dividing information content into discrete pay periods and re-
3 key periods.

1 67. The system of claim 66, further comprising:
2 means for associating security keys with a user, wherein a first security
3 key corresponds to a current re-key period and a second security key corresponds to a
4 subsequent re-key period.

1 68. The system of claim 66, wherein means for dividing information
2 content into discrete pay periods and re-key periods includes means for dividing such that
3 pay periods are multiples of re-key periods.

1 69. The system of claim 66, wherein means for dividing information
2 content into discrete pay periods and re-key periods includes means for dividing such that
3 the pay periods are aligned with re-key periods.